

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4404

March 15, 2016

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write at this time to request that you revisit a heartbreaking situation affecting our constituents in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). As you know, the DRC stopped issuing "exit letters" nearly two and a half years ago, leaving hundreds of legally adopted children stranded and separated from their adopting parents and bringing about significant hardship for adopting families.

Although families have gone through the proper channels to adopt a child, the DRC continues to refuse to issue DRC exit permits. While the DRC claims it has halted the adoption process due to concerns for the health and well-being of adopted children, such claims are suspect. Children have suffered the psychological harm that comes from prolonged stays in orphanages and repeated disappointment. And many adoptees in poor health have been denied essential medical care that they would have certainly received had they been living with their new families in the United States. Some of these children even died as they awaited the care they required.

Utah families have adopted sixteen children from the DRC, and they have since endured significant hardship fighting for their children. Utah parents not only long for their families to be made whole, but also incur significant costs paying others to care for these children in their absence. When added to the already high cost of adoption, these expenses can lead adopting families to diminish their own standard of living or sell existing assets.

The Department of State has aggressively pursued solutions to unite adoptees with their American families, and we commend them on their efforts and the progress they have made. Recently, the DRC stated that all adoption cases would be resolved by the end of March. However, many families have grown increasingly frustrated as promises made by the DRC to the Department of State have gone unfulfilled. Because of this, we fear that this crisis will continue despite the DRC's stated goal. As Members of Congress, we will continue to review all viable options to end the exit permit suspension. In the meantime, we respectfully request your assistance in speaking with President Kabila to ask that he ensure all adoption cases are resolved before the end of March.

Utah parents have long desired to bring their adopted children home and, as elected officials, we should work to support strong, legally unified families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mia Love", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Mia Love

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Chaffetz", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rob Bishop", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Rob Bishop

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Stewart", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Chris Stewart